



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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WENDY L. WATANABE
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ASST. AUDITOR-CONTROLLERS

ROBERT A. DAVIS
JOHN NAIMO
JUDI E. THOMAS

May 12, 2011

TO: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **FOSTER FAMILY NETWORK FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT
REVIEW – A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
PROVIDER**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Foster Family Network Foster Family Agency (FFN or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) provider. The purpose of our review was to determine whether FFN was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We completed our review during August 2009 and conducted a follow-up review in October 2010.

DCFS contracts with FFN, a private non-profit community-based organization to recruit, train and certify foster parents for supervising children DCFS places in foster care. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program. FFN oversees 113 certified foster homes in which 206 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. FFN is located in the Fourth District. DCFS paid FFN approximately \$4.4 million during Fiscal Year 2009-10.

Results of Review

The foster parents indicated that the services they received from FFN met their expectations, the children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents, and the toddlers we observed appeared well cared for and healthy. In addition, the Agency ensured that social workers' caseloads did not exceed the maximum established by California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 regulations. FFN also ensured that staff possessed the required education and work experience, conducted

hiring clearances, and provided ongoing training for staff working on the County contract. However, FFN did not always ensure that the foster homes complied with other County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Specifically, we noted the following:

- One (10%) of the 10 foster parents reviewed in 2009 did not complete the required 15 hours of annual continuing education training. This issue was also noted in our FFN contract review report issued on September 30, 2008.

During our follow-up review in 2010, all six additional foster parents reviewed completed the required training.

FFN's attached response indicates that they are monitoring foster parents to ensure they complete the training.

- Two (10%) of the 20 children reviewed in 2009 received their initial medical and dental examinations late. The medical exams were late by an average of 27 days and the dental exams were late by an average of 32 days. This issue was also noted in our report issued on September 30, 2008.

During our follow-up review in 2010, all five additional children reviewed received their initial medical and dental exams timely.

FFN's attached response indicates that they have had difficulty scheduling appointments but will complete the examinations timely.

Details of our review, along with recommendations for corrective action, are attached.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with FFN on December 16, 2010. In their attached response, FFN indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations (Attachment I). We also notified DCFS of the results of our initial and follow-up reviews. In their responses to both reviews (Attachment II), DCFS indicates they will monitor the Agency for compliance with our recommendations.

Board of Supervisors
May 12, 2011
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We thank FFN management for their cooperation and assistance during our review. Please call me if you have any questions or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:JET:DC:AA

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Jackie Contreras, Ph.D, Interim Director, DCFS
Tim Richmond, Chairman of the Board, Foster Family Network
Cherrie Gibbs, Director, Foster Family Network
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
FOSTER FAMILY NETWORK FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FISCAL YEAR 2009-10**

BACKGROUND

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) pays Foster Family Network Foster Family Agency (FFN or Agency) a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Foster Care Rates Bureau. Based on the child's age, FFN receives between \$1,430 and \$1,679 per month, per child. DCFS paid FFN approximately \$4.4 million during Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-10.

PURPOSE/METHODOLOGY

The purpose of our review was to determine whether FFN was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files and interviewed FFN staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed the children and foster parents. We completed our review in August 2009 and conducted a follow-up review in October 2010.

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether FFN provided program services in accordance with their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We visited eight of the 113 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that FFN billed DCFS and interviewed nine foster parents and 16 children placed in the eight homes. We also observed two toddlers who were too young to interview. In addition, we reviewed the case files for ten foster parents and 20 children and we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity. During October 2010, we reviewed additional case files for six foster parents and five children.

Results

FFN needs to ensure that foster parents complete the required training and that children receive initial medical and dental examinations timely. Specifically, we noted the following:

- One (10%) of the 10 foster parents reviewed in 2009 did not complete the required 15 hours of annual continuing education training. This issue was also noted in our FFN contract review report issued on September 30, 2008.

During our follow-up review in 2010, all six additional foster parents reviewed completed the required training.

- Two (10%) of the 20 children reviewed in 2009 received their initial medical and dental examinations late. The medical exams were late by an average of 27 days and the dental exams were late by an average of 32 days. This issue was also noted in our report issued on September 30, 2008.

During our follow-up review in 2010, all five additional children reviewed received their initial medical and dental exams timely.

Recommendations

FFN management ensure:

- 1. Foster parents complete the required number of annual continuing education training hours.**
- 2. Children's medical and dental examinations are conducted timely.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

Determine whether the program participants received the services that FFN billed to DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed 16 children placed in eight of FFN's certified foster homes and nine foster parents to confirm the services the Agency billed to DCFS. In addition, we observed two toddlers who were too young to interview.

Results

The foster children indicated they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents indicated that the services they received from FFN met their expectations. In addition, the toddlers we observed appeared well cared for and healthy.

Recommendation

None.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS**Objective**

Verify that FFN social workers' caseloads do not exceed 15 placements and that the supervising social workers do not supervise more than six social workers as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We interviewed FFN's Regional Director and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers.

Results

FFN's 15 social workers carried an average of 15 cases and the Agency's four supervising social workers supervised an average of four social workers.

Recommendation

None.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS**Objective**

Determine whether FFN's staff possess the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether the Agency conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

Verification

We interviewed FFN's Regional Director and reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

Results

FFN's staff possessed the required education and work experience and the Agency conducted hiring clearances and provided ongoing training for staff working on the County contract.

Recommendation

None.

PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP**Objective**

Determine the status of the recommendations reported in the prior Auditor-Controller monitoring review.

Verification

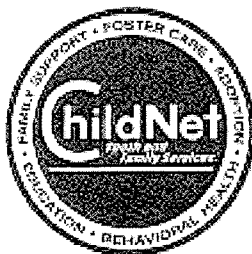
We verified whether the outstanding recommendations from the FY 2006-07 monitoring review were implemented. The report was issued on September 30, 2008.

Results

The September 30, 2008 monitoring report had 11 recommendations. The Agency fully implemented nine of the recommendations. However, the Agency has not implemented two recommendations from the September 30, 2008 monitoring review.

Recommendation

3. FFN management implement the outstanding recommendations from the September 30, 2008 monitoring report.



**Foster
Family
Network**

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Regional Director
Cherie Gibbs, M.F.T.

900 E. Wardlow Road
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12/17/2010

County of Los Angeles
Department of Auditor-Controller
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 525
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2706

To: Wendy Watanabe, Auditor-Controller

Re: Response to Contract Review Draft Letter Dated 2/22/10

Dear Wendy Watanabe:

Re: Response to Contract Review Draft Letter Dated 2/22/10

Dear Wendy Watanabe:

The following Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for the agency's review which the exit review, took place on August 26, 2009 was submitted to the Auditor Controller's office on March 9, 2010. The CAP was accepted at this time by the Auditor Controller's Office and Foster Family Network has continued to implement these items since March 9, 2010.

Our agency is in receipt of the draft report created following the contract compliance review which was conducted by the Auditor-Controller's Countrywide Contract Monitoring division. The exit conference was held on August 26, 2009.

The following is our agency's response to the findings and recommendations from the above mentioned audit.

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that FFN management ensure that foster parents complete the required number of annual continuing education training hours.

Response

The agency agrees to continue using procedures already in place to monitor that foster parents complete all required annual training requirements. Enclosed please find the Monthly Foster Parent Reminder form used for internal tracking of this requirement. Please note that despite our best efforts to meet this requirement, foster parents sometimes fail to comply with our directions.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that FFN management ensure that children's medical and dental examinations are conducted within the required time frames.



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Response

Please note the agency's timely completion of medical examinations in the cases noted during this review was hampered by the DCFS requirement that all newly placed foster children receive a Medical Hub examination. The non-availability of Hub appointments within the time frame required by the DCFS contract makes it difficult for the agency to meet this requirement. The agency will continue to attempt to complete medical examinations in a timely manner in conjunction with cooperation from and collaboration with foster parents, DCFS Hub locations and CSWs. The agency intends to seek other medical providers for more urgent medical examinations when Hub appointments are not available. The agency is currently gathering statistical data related to the non-availability of Hub appointments which will be submitted to the Out of Home Care Monitoring division for the first two quarters of 2010. Enclosed please find the tracking form being used to gather this data.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that FFN management implement the outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2006-2007 monitoring report.

Response

Please see our responses to Recommendations 1 and 2 above for our plan to implement the outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2006-2007 monitoring report.

The Auditor Controller's office came out to Foster Family Network for a follow up to review on October, 2010 wherein children and foster parent files were both reviewed. The auditor, verbally reported on October, 2010, that all items from the previous CAP were being implemented based upon her follow up review, Foster Family Network will continue to successfully implement all of these items from the CAP above.

We appreciate your time and assistance with meeting our DCFS contract requirements.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cherrie Gibbs
Cherrie Gibbs signing for Cherrie Gibbs
Cherrie Gibbs, M.S., MFT
Regional Director
Foster Family Network



PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW
Director

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90021
(213) 351-5502

June 10, 2010

TO: Aggie Alonso, Chief Accountant-Auditor
Countywide Contract Monitoring Division

FROM: Elizabeth A. Howard, Section Head *E.A. Howard*
Out of Home Care Management Division
Foster Family Agency/Group Home Performance Management

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**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF
FOSTER FAMILY NETWORK FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

The Auditor Controller's Contract Review of Foster Family Network Foster Family Agency was conducted in August 2009. The Out of Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) received the Auditor-Controller's March 9, 2010 final draft report of the contract compliance review on March 9, 2010. The DCFS Monitor reviewed the report on March 10, 2010.

The A-C review found no egregious findings which rose to the level of a referral to the Child Protection Hotline. The report, however, noted that one of the eleven reviewed foster parents did not complete 15 hours of annual continuing education. The foster parent completed 12 hours prior to her re-certification. Ms. Cherrie Gibbs, FFA Director, stated on March 11, 2010 that the foster parent in question completed 16 hours of annual continuing education, but the documentation was "misplaced." Ms. Gibbs informed the Monitor on March 23, 2010 that she conducted "Corrective Action Training" with the FFA social workers, supervisors and office staff several days from March 15 to March 19, 2010 and discussed the "importance of establishing a paper trail when processing documents turned in by foster parents." Ms. Gibbs further informed the Monitor that when the foster parents are non-compliant, the FFA "suspends further placements until all the requirements are met."

The A-C report also noted that two of the twenty sampled children's initial medical and dental examinations were not conducted within the required timeframes. One child's initial medical exam was completed 42 days late and her initial dental exam was 59 days late. Another child's initial medical exam was completed 11 days late and his dental exam was 4 days late. Ms. Gibbs stated that she reinforced Title 22 regulations and County contract requirements related to timely medical and dental examinations in the "Corrective Action Training" to ensure that the foster parents adhere to these

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**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF
FOSTER FAMILY NETWORK FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
PAGE 2**

timeframes. Ms. Gibbs provided the Monitor with the manual she used in the trainings and the sign-in sheets as proof of staff attendance.

The Auditor Controller approved Foster Family Network FFA's CAP dated March 9, 2010 which includes the FFA's internal tracking forms to ensure that all foster parents complete the required continuing education hours and that the annual medical and dental examinations are conducted for all children in a timely manner.

The OHCMD will conduct a follow-up review to determine full and ongoing implementation of the A-C's recommendations by November, 2010.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (626) 569-6804.

MG:EAH:CC:EK

- c: Brian Mahan, CEO, Children & Families Well-Being Cluster
- Wendy L. Watanabe, Auditor-Controller
- Patricia Ploehn, Director, DCFS
- Lisa Parrish, Deputy Director, DCFS



Antonio Jimenez, Deputy CEO
Interim Director

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

5225 Teletar Ave., Suite 218, El Monte, California 91731
(626) 569-6861

January 13, 2011

TO: Aggie Alonso, Chief Accountant-Auditor
Countywide Contract Monitoring Division

FROM: Elizabeth A. Howard, Section Head
Out of Home Care Management Division
Foster Family Agency/Group Home Performance Management

Board of Supervisors
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Fourth District
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MAYOR,
Fifth District

**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF
FOSTER FAMILY NETWORK FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

The Auditor Controller's (A-C) Contract Review of Foster Family Network Foster Family Agency was conducted during August 2009. The Out of Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) received the A-C's March 9, 2010 initial draft report of the contract compliance review on March 9, 2010. The DCFS Monitor reviewed the report on March 10, 2010 and provided the response letter to the A-C on June 10, 2010.

The A-C's August 2009 review found no egregious findings which rose to the level of a referral to the Child Protection Hotline. The A-C's initial report, however, noted that one of the eleven reviewed foster parents did not complete 15 hours of annual continuing education. The foster parent completed 12 hours prior to her re-certification. Ms. Cherrie Gibbs, FFA Director, stated on March 11, 2010 that the foster parent in question completed 15 hours of annual continuing education, but the verifying documentation was "misplaced." Ms. Gibbs informed the Monitor on March 23, 2010 that she conducted "Corrective Action Training" with the FFA social workers, supervisors and office staff several days from March 15 to March 19, 2010 and discussed the "importance of establishing a paper trail when processing documents turned in by foster parents." Ms. Gibbs further informed the Monitor that when the foster parents are non-compliant, the FFA "suspends further placements until all the requirements are met." The A-C's initial report also noted that two of the twenty sampled children's initial medical and dental examinations were not conducted within the required timeframes. One child's initial medical exam was completed 42 days late and her initial dental exam was 59 days late. Another child's initial medical exam was completed 11 days late and his dental exam was 4 days late. Ms. Gibbs stated that she reinforced Title 22 regulations and County contract requirements related to timely medical and dental examinations in the "Corrective Action Training" to ensure that the

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**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF
FOSTER FAMILY NETWORK FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
PAGE 2**

foster parents adhere to these timeframes. Ms. Gibbs provided the Monitor with the manual she used in the trainings and the sign-in sheets as proof of staff attendance.

The A-C approved Foster Family Network FFA's CAP dated March 9, 2010 which includes the FFA's internal tracking forms to ensure that all foster parents complete the required continuing education hours and that the annual medical and dental examinations are conducted for all children in a timely manner.

On December 21, 2010, the A-C informed OHCMD that they conducted a follow up review during October 2010 to determine the status of their prior findings and provided an updated draft report dated December 21, 2010. The A-C's follow up review reflects that the A-C verified the implementation of their recommendations in all areas of concerns. There are no outstanding findings.

The OHCMD will continue to monitor the Agency's ongoing compliance with the State regulations within six months after the issuance of the A-C's final report.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (626) 569-6804.

KR:EAH:CC:ek

c David Seidenfeld, CEO, Children & Families Well-Being Cluster
Wendy L. Watanabe, Auditor-Controller
Antonio Jimenez, Interim Director, DCFS
Lisa Parrish, Deputy Director, DCFS